

This is John Gullam with Community Comment

Thank you From Jim and Wendy and From Dennis and Leslie

These are a few of the individuals whose lives have been saved or improved because of the generosity of blood donors in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.

Every day blood products are, drawn, tested, processed, inventoried and shipped to patients who need them.

For this, blood donors receive a cookie and a thank you. They don't make the front page or the news feed or the 6 O'clock news. They do what they do because they know that someone must, that there is no substitute for human blood, no miracle cure or nano technology that can heal patients in need of these vital components.

They also know that their donation doesn't sit on a shelf indefinitely waiting to be needed. These generous members of our community understand that just as new Red Cells are replenished in the body every few months, donated Red Cells ^{MUST} ~~must~~ be used or discarded. They understand that in less than a week their platelets will be sent to a patient somewhere who needs them but that they will no longer be available for local patients and must be replenished constantly.

What many of these committed donors also understand is that on any given day between 16 and 20% of the individuals who come to donate at the blood Bank or on a Bloodmobile will be turned away. They know that stringent regulation and a mission of providing the safest blood supply possible, means that any possibility of transmission of Malaria or Chagas Disease or the flu will result in a deferral. A deferral of 24 hours, or one year. Or an indefinite deferral.

What these donors understand is that in the span of a year nearly 3,000 of their fellow donors will cease to be eligible. That in order to maintain an adequate blood supply for patients in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties SOMEONE MUST step-up. Someone must consider, when they think "But I don't like needles" about the patients. I doubt most patients enter the hospital liking needles and I would bet fewer leave being fond of them.

An individual can donate Whole Blood 6 times a year. It's not required. Most of our donors see us 2 to 3 times a year.

If you give us 4 hours a year we will leave you the other 8,765 to mow the lawn – or fix the fence – or clean out the shed.

Blood Donors DO save lives.

This has been John Gullam from the Northern California Community Blood Bank for Community Comment